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Sen. Stamas' bill to protect charitable fire departments sent to governor

LANSING – Legislation introduced by Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, allowing fire departments to donate surplus equipment to fire departments in need without fearing liability was sent to the governor Tuesday.

“This is great news,” Stamas said. “When this bill is signed into law it will allow fire departments across the state with surplus equipment to help out less fortunate fire departments. Fire service equipment is expensive and we need to do everything in our power to help maintain a high level of public safety in communities across our state.”

Stamas' legislation will release the donating party from liability for damages for personal injury, death or property damage, while providing standards prohibiting gross negligence or intentional misconduct by the donors.

Beaver Creek Fire Chief Ed Holtcamp, the past president and legislative liaison for the Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association and the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs, previously testified before the Senate Committee on Local, Urban and State Affairs in support of Senate Bill 689.

“Public safety is a top priority for every community,” Stamas said. “Unfortunately, not every fire department can afford to buy the expensive equipment out of their budget when it's needed. Departments that are able to secure grants to purchase new equipment would donate their extra equipment if there was no fear of liability. My bill allows those fire departments to do exactly that – help out another fire department by donating excess equipment without the fear of liability.”

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Editor's note: A photo of Sen. Stamas and Beaver Creek Fire Chief Ed Holtcamp testifying can be found on the Senate Majority Photowire at:
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Stamas/Stamas.htm>